

## INTRODUCTION

Japan where he would confront them. The JAAF involvement in New Guinea did not really end until 1954 when four bedraggled and armed men were paraded before a Dutch policeman outside Hollandia. The villagers who brought them were insistent that they were Japanese. Communication was awkward, for the stragglers spoke no Dutch and only a smattering of a tribal language. These were the last JAAF survivors from the jungle retreat and were treated as heroes when they finally returned to Japan.

Throughout the text the name “Wewak” often refers to the general area around Wewak, including the plethora of airfields which populated the northern New Guinea coast from Hansa Bay all the way to Aitape. Note also that, strictly speaking, the Japanese definition of the New Guinea theatre did not include Hollandia (which was in Dutch New Guinea). Operations around Hollandia, where the Japanese had three major airfields, are included in detail, however, as they were quintessential to the final days of the New Guinea campaign.

I hope you enjoy exploring the colours and rationale of these mercurial combatants from so many years ago.

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